

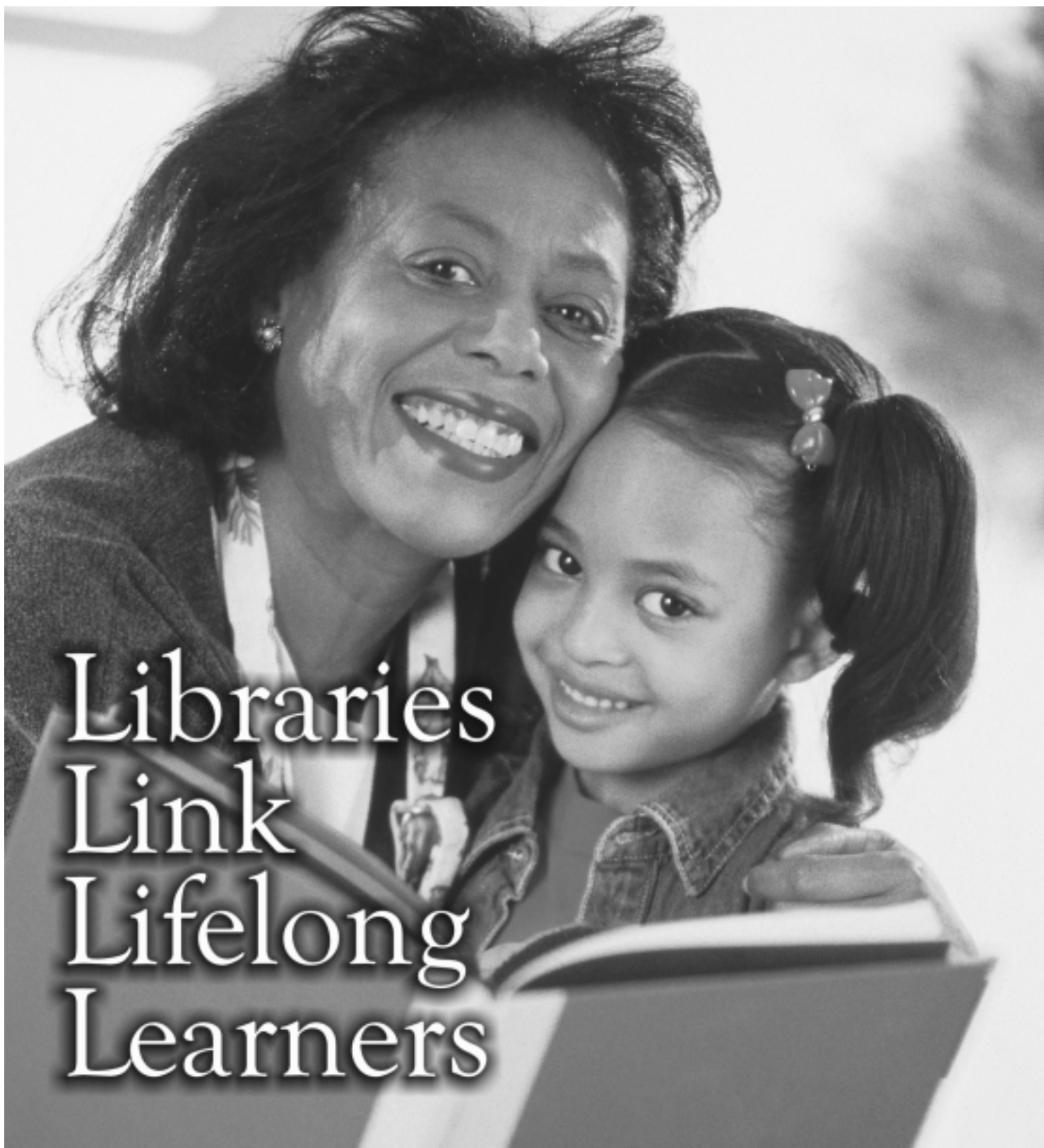
Florida Libraries



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE FLORIDA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Volume 44, No.2

Fall 2001



Libraries
Link
Lifelong
Learners

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EDITOR'S NOTE

"Whom do you consider lifelong learners?" someone asked in the midst of a conversation about the theme for this issue. The articles that follow illustrate the term in its broadest sense, encompassing diverse programs and services for people of all ages, from newborns to residents of assisted living facilities. Some feature programs geared to people with little formal education and others to people with advanced degrees. Others focus on specific groups including non-English speakers, economically disadvantaged persons, and those needing computer technology training.

Changes in our culture and economy are demanding new skills and continued learning,

and libraries across Florida are responding to meet these needs in the communities they serve.

At the same time that libraries are reaching out to serve people in their communities, they're also looking inward and recognizing that, due to the fast-changing nature of our profession, library staffs need continual training to be able to provide effective services. Not only are we in the library profession assisting others in lifelong learning activities, but we must be lifelong learners, too.

Enjoy reading — you're bound to be inspired!

— Gloria Colvin



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Editor

Gloria Colvin, gcolvin@mail.dos.state.fl.us
State Library of Florida

Designer

Faye Howell, Meacham Howell Design

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Marjorie Stealey, mjs@crowsegal.com

Advertising: Kim O'Dell

<http://www.flalib.org>

Member, Florida Magazine Association

Send articles for Florida Libraries to Editor Gloria Colvin, State Library of Florida, R.A. Gray Bldg., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250; gcolvin@mail.dos.state.fl.us; by January 15 for Spring issue; July 15 for Fall issue.

An Interview With FLA President Betty Johnson

FLA's president for the 2001-2002 year is Betty Johnson, Associate Director for Technical Services at Stetson University's duPont-Ball Library. In this interview with *Florida Libraries* she talks about her career in librarianship and shares some of her views on the challenges and excitement that the library profession currently offers.

FL: What motivated you to become a librarian?

BJ: When my family moved from Ohio to Florida, and I entered the fifth grade at Holly Hill School near Daytona Beach, I discovered the school library and fell in love. The amount of knowledge and fun in that small library was overwhelming. I have never gotten over this sense of awe at what is available. I worked in the Stetson Library as an undergraduate, and, while completing my M.A. in History, the Director offered me the position of Acquisitions Librarian if I would begin work on an M.L.S. I immediately wanted to do this rather than teach, and my husband supported the decision. I completed the degree in four summers at Columbia University, one of the best in the country and now closed, unfortunately. Columbia allowed me to tailor my course work around an academic library concentration.

FL: Have you spent most of your career in academic libraries?

BJ: I have spent my entire career in two academic libraries — forty years at Stetson University, broken by one year at Armstrong State College in Savannah about thirty years ago. I love the interaction with college students and faculty and can't imagine working in a different type of library.

FL: What are some of your personal interests?

BJ: Travel and antiques. My husband and I traveled abroad every summer, often to Spain, Latin America, and France, where we would rent a car and tour on our own. Since his death, I have taken several tours, including a tour to India during the 1999/2000 New Year's period.



Betty Johnson

FL: How does the theme you've chosen for your year as president fit in with your plans for the year?

BJ: My theme of "Libraries Link Lifelong Learners" fits with the initial awe I felt and still feel for knowledge and what libraries do to promote learning for people of all ages and social/economic status. Maintaining free access to this knowledge and information in all formats is vital. Such access is a key element of our Legislative Platform as FLA advocates for funding for resources, both physical and virtual.

FL: What do you see as the biggest challenges facing librarianship today?

BJ: One of the biggest challenges remains selecting and organizing the materials our users need without censorship. This requires a thorough knowledge of our users, our communities, and the materials available. Collection development policies and procedures need to extend from the physical to the virtual. The Internet opens a cornucopia of sites — it is as if every book and magazine published were available, regardless of quality, veracity of content, or purpose. As librarians, we need to develop portals to our virtual libraries,

which will contain links to the best materials available online in the same way we review, select, and catalog books to meet our users' needs.

FL: What do you consider the most exciting developments in librarianship?

BJ: Librarianship is one of the most exciting and challenging fields I know because the advent of automation put us on a steep learning curve with no ending. Five years ago, we wheeled into our library a large, state-of-the-art CD-Rom server and almost immediately filled twenty-four slots with great new subscription databases. I learned enough Novell to manage it. Last month, now with empty slots as we have converted all to Internet subscriptions, we wheeled it out. While the Novell is helpful in dealing with Windows NT, I have been learning HTML to handle our various Web pages. The rate of change is constant, as librarians need to learn new databases and new software programs, design and redesign teaching tools, and try to provide what is needed with limited funds.

FL: How can FLA reach out to and best serve libraries in the state?

BJ: This brings up an interesting question I have asked the Planning Committee to review. Is the purpose of FLA to serve libraries or librarians? What should the mix be? Lisa Manners, Chair of the Membership Committee has been holding focus group meetings to find out more clearly what our members want from the organization. This is a two-year project, which will be completed this year.

The Latest News

Check out the FLA Web site www.flalib.org for library and association news and for information about FLA.

Libraries Link Lifelong Learners to Their Communities

By Nancy Pike

In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster, 2000), author Robert D. Putnam argues that civil society is breaking down as Americans become more disconnected from their families, neighbors, and communities. The organizations that gave life to democracy a generation ago are fraying, he says. Using bowling as a metaphor, he states that years ago, thousands of people belonged to bowling leagues. Today, although there are more total bowlers, the number in leagues has diminished by 40% since 1980. People are bowling alone just as they are doing most other things alone rather than in community groups.

Not only are people becoming more disconnected from civic life and social networks, but they also are voting less – nationwide the turnout is down by about 25% from 1960. The trend has other disturbing implications. Communities with less “social capital” have lower educational performance and more teen pregnancy, child suicide, low birth weight, and prenatal mortality. Social capital is also a strong predictor of crime rates and other measures of neighborhood quality of life, including health.

“Part of the excitement libraries contribute to lifelong learning is the avenue they provide for becoming connected to the community.”

We can work again to rebuild our eroded social capital, claims Putnam, but it will take the concerted creativity and energy of Americans nationwide to re-develop the social capital our nation had in the early 20th Century. At the American Library Association conference in San Francisco this summer, Putnam suggested ways we can reconnect to community life. Libraries are critical to that effort, he said.

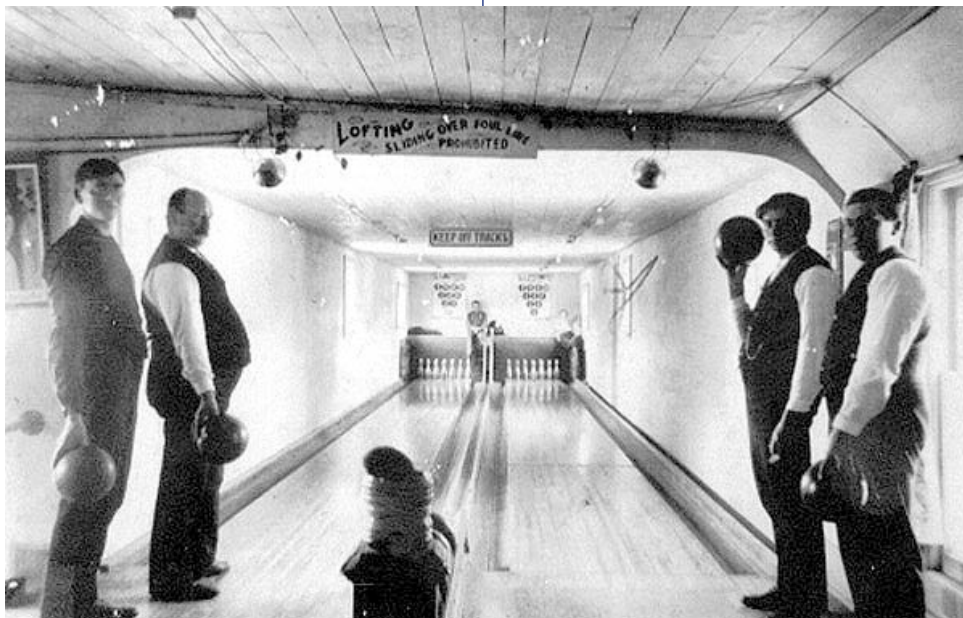
Activities already going on in libraries are contributing to our social capital. Infant and toddler programs bring moms together in new sharing relationships as well as giving them

support in developing reading readiness skills in their children. Cultural programs provide “bridging” experiences, bringing diverse individuals together to share a common enriching experience. Current affairs discussion groups offer the opportunity for an exchange of ideas and information. Free access to the Internet and instruction on how to use it are basic building blocks in narrowing the digital divide. And volunteering not only supports library activities, but also provides participants with ways to interact while contributing to the growth and development of a critical community resource.

Putnam’s ideas build on the proposals made by Sarah Long, last year’s ALA President, in her initiative called “Libraries Build Sustainable Communities.” Libraries are uniquely positioned to be leaders in this effort, believes Long. “Couple this advantage with the other usual librarian talents: tolerance for diversity of opinion, facilitation skills, familiarity and comfort with new technology, and you have an organization poised to be integral to every community decision.”

Part of the excitement libraries contribute to lifelong learning is the avenue they provide for becoming connected to the community, helping to build that social capital that we need. For more ideas on ways Florida libraries can participate in community building, take a look at www.bettertogether.org and www.sustainable.org.

Nancy Pike is director of the Sarasota County Public Libraries.



Bowling at Eberle's Tavern, Kewaskum, WI, 1930. Photo courtesy of Kewaskum Historical Society.

Opening Windows to the World

By David G. McMurrin

My father began his quest for learning at the age of eight in a small rural library in Iowa.

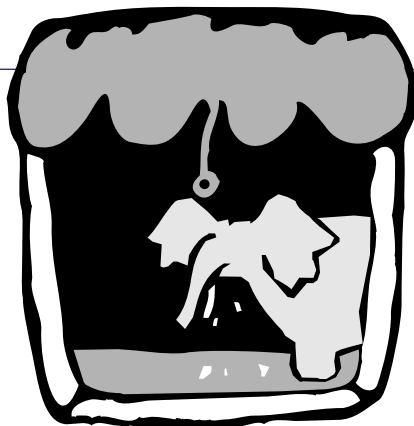
Orphaned at an early age, he was taken in by his mother's cousin Laura, whose husband died shortly after my father joined the family. His small-town world consisted of home, school, and working at the local swimming pool on weekends, where the owner let him pick up trash in exchange for free access to the pool.

After school, he would go to the house of a retired World War I veteran who sold popcorn. The vet's house was a mile from school and home, but it was only a block from the library. My father didn't have any money, so he negotiated a system where he would get a bag of popcorn on credit, paying the veteran back when he did have money, which he did conscientiously.

He would then walk the block to the library and spend the day and sometimes most of the night there browsing the stacks for anything. He was a voracious reader, reading adventure stories, travel books, biographies, and history. There was one book that he couldn't read enough. Over and over, he read *I Married Adventure*, the biography of Osa and Martin Johnson. Osa wrote about her husband's photo safaris in the 1930s and 40s, and the book was lavishly illustrated with pictures of charging elephants, headhunters roasting heads, and lions on the hunt. What a wild and wonderful place the world was to this small town boy, peering through this book like a window into the Serengeti Plains. When the library closed he walked the mile home at night, even in the cold Iowa winter.

He joined the army at seventeen, leaving Iowa for a chance to see those faraway places he had read about. He was stationed in Turkey, Greece, Saudi Arabia, and Alaska, places that before had seemed as far as the moon from his hometown. After the service he moved to his hometown and met my mother, a high school French teacher just beginning her career.

As I grew up, I was aware that my family was a little different than others, in that our usual entertainment consisted of long nights reading. We all read – my mother, my father,



and myself, reading whatever struck our interests, sharing funny or thought-provoking passages with each other, and passing a good book to the next person who hadn't had a chance to yet read it. We never watched TV – in fact, for a while we just didn't have one. We went to the library at least weekly, returning books and getting the latest titles of our favorite authors. Our town library was a Carnegie library, with ivy-covered brick walls and cool marble floors. Like my father, I, too, read everything I could get my hands on.

I went to college, my reading habits making my schooling a lot easier. I fumbled through various career choices, but there was a thread through all the jobs I had done, and that was books and libraries. I worked in them, studied in them, and the access to knowledge they allowed illuminated my life. My father asked what sort of career I could have in libraries, and, with the encouragement of the staff at the college library where I was working at the

“What a wild and wonderful place the world was to this small town boy, peering through this book like a window into the Serengeti Plains.”

time, I wound up the recipient of a Masters in Library Science.

My father continued his reading habits, but never went on to get an advanced degree. I had always been impressed with the amount of knowledge my father had accumulated, but I was really unaware of its scope and breadth until shortly after my wedding.

A member of the wedding party was my mentor in reference librarianship, and held a Master's degree in English in addition to Library Science. He was a little older than I, and he and my father hit it off instantly. During the week of the wedding, he and my father roamed the shelves of bookstores and coffee shops and talked about favorite books and authors. When I returned from my honeymoon, my mentor asked me about my father's education and I told him he was, as far as I knew, almost entirely self-taught.

“Your father,” he said, “would quote passages from books I had read and forgotten. He would then tell me when he read them, and it would turn out I had read them more recently. He's the most well-read man I've ever met.” This comes from a man with a Master's in English Literature who was frequently consulted by faculty members at a small liberal arts college for his reference talents.

I talk to my father at least weekly, and his reading interests are still as wide-ranging as they always have been. In this past month, he's read, or re-read, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Henry James' *The Patagonia*, a biography of Lancelot Andrewes (one of the scholars responsible for the King James version of the Bible), and a book on super-string theory.

Now I'm a library director in a small library in Florida. We are the only place listed under “Points of Interest” in the local paper's county directory for our community. There are kids just like my father riding their bikes to the library, checking out the same books over and over, their nebulous dreams forming with every visit. Though now we offer more than just books, like my father's small hometown library we offer the opportunity, for a lifetime, to expand one's vision to the faraway Serengeti and beyond.

David G. McMurrin is director of the Port St. John Library.

The New Frontier: Literacy Training in the Workplace

By Roberta Reiss and Linda Fasulo

If you choose to look up the word "retirement" in the latest edition of the *Oxford American Thesaurus*, you would find words like withdrawal, exit, retreat, seclusion, solitude, and loneliness listed as possible synonyms. But this article is not about synonyms; it is about antonyms...antonyms like active, involved, interested, vibrant, productive, and alive. It's about places like Bentley Village and Moorings Park, and it's about workplace-based literacy tutoring programs that are literally changing people's lives.

Bentley Village and Moorings Park are life care residential and assisted living communities for retirees. Moorings Park is located in Naples, while Bentley Village is situated on the border between Collier and Lee Counties. In both communities, the median age is around eighty-five years. But residents quite simply refuse to let that get in the way of their living full and productive lives. One of the ways in which they are accomplishing this is by volunteering as tutors within their respective communities, in workplace-based adult literacy tutoring programs affiliated with the Collier County Public Library's Adult Literacy Program.

Library Adopts Literacy Program

In January of 2000, Collier County Public Library adopted a local adult literacy program originally founded by Marco Island resident Jo Lozier. Initially run entirely by a dedicated staff of volunteers, the program grew rapidly to the point that full-time help was essential. Through a donation to the library from the estate of the late Gordon Lozier, a Literacy Program Coordinator was hired, and the volunteer-based program became an outreach of the Collier County Public Library system.

The original thrust of the Collier County Public Library Adult Literacy Program was based upon the Laubach Literacy method of

"Over 5,000 adults who lack adequate reading skills move to Florida each month."

teaching English as a Second Language (ESOL), and that is...*each one teach one*. The library's literacy efforts concentrated on small group and one-on-one tutoring. However, it was not long before the need for a workplace-based literacy program was identified and the groundwork put in place to support such a program.

Workplace Literacy Programs

While literacy programs are not new, the concept of workplace-based literacy training programs is relatively so. Given the

multicultural make-up of Florida's population, these programs are a natural fit.

In its 1991 National Literacy Act, Congress defined literacy as: *an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential.*¹ According to the National Institute for Literacy, forty-four million, or 20 percent of adults lack the literacy foundation they need to find and keep decent jobs, support their children's education and participate actively in civic life. An additional forty million Americans ages sixteen and older have literacy needs that are significant, though not as severe.² The end result is that literacy levels in a significant percentage of the population make it difficult, if not impossible, for these individuals to earn a living wage.

The State of Florida reports that over 5,000 adults who lack adequate reading skills move to Florida each month.³ These include migrant workers, immigrants, and families who are at or below the poverty level. Illiteracy affects the quality of life for us all. Statistically, those who cannot read, who have great difficulty



Collier County Public Library Literacy Program Coordinator Roberta Reiss teaches a tutor training class at Bentley Village.

doing so, or who are non-English speaking can find it difficult to get and keeps jobs. Enter Moorings Park...

Moorings Park Tutoring Program

In 1997, Moorings Park recognized the need and developed an ESOL program for its non-English speaking staff. Their original program had structural problems and only moderate success. Understanding the need for more extensive training, better teaching materials, and program structuring for volunteers within their residential and assisted living community, Program Coordinator Margaret Bill contacted the Collier County Public Library's Literacy Coordinator for input and direction.

Training classes were established for Moorings Park residents, which would take into consideration the age and physical limitations of the volunteers. In the past, tutor training had generally consisted of one full day of training, with a follow-up half-day session once tutors began working with their students. Instead of this, the training sessions at Moorings Park were divided into four two-hour seminars specifically targeting workplace vocabulary and dialogue, along with several follow-up "shop talk" sessions as needed.

Making A Difference

As a result of this inter-organizational cooperation between the library and Moorings Park, this approach has shown great success. Presently, there are eighteen Laubach-trained Moorings Park residents serving as volunteer

"As communication between residents and staff improves, quite naturally, so does the level of care."

tutors. They, in turn, teach English on a one-on-one basis to eighteen Moorings Park employees. The students have been the direct beneficiaries of this program. Over the last year, two have received promotions from housekeeping staff to Certified Nurses Aides, one has been promoted from housekeeping to Home Health Certified Aide, and a third (a pharmacist in her own country) has been promoted from dishwasher to dining room attendant. It is her hope that by learning to speak and read English, she will soon be able to pursue a career within her field.

Bentley Village Program

At Bentley Village, the story is similar. Program Coordinator Janet Hittler, who is also a full-time resident of Bentley Village, presently oversees twenty-two volunteer tutors who work one-on-one with twenty-two Bentley Village employees. They too are Laubach trained. The training at Bentley Village consisted of two five-hour sessions, and one follow-up three-hour session at which tutors were invited to discuss problems and share any successes they had experienced in beginning to work with their students.

Residents/Tutors Also Beneficiaries

Interestingly, literacy-tutoring programs at assisted living facilities have a unique twist. First, residents must agree to learn to teach English and basic literacy skills to speakers of other languages. Secondly, they must commit to meeting with their student for one hour at least twice weekly. What is interesting is that they are clearly as much the beneficiaries of the program as are their students. It seems that once the language barrier has been broken, socialization opportunities for the resident/tutor are greatly increased, which then enhances the quality of life for that resident. Also, as communication between residents and staff improves, quite naturally, so does the level of care.

Workplace-based literacy tutoring programs within assisted living facilities work best when coordinated on-site by an activities director or human resources employee. Collier County Public Library's Adult Literacy

Program works closely with these facility representatives in providing tutor training and technical support. This includes advice on what materials to purchase, program coordination tips, and assistance with database management. The library also offers a tutor hotline as an "open ear" for any questions or issues that might arise in tutoring an adult learner.

Programs Benefit Employers

There are also benefits to employers as a direct result of workplace-based literacy tutoring programs. Companies and institutions enjoy improved employee retention and are able to promote from within – a decided plus in a sector where hiring experienced service personnel is a daily challenge.

As the workplace-based aspect of the library's adult literacy program continues to evolve, staff is busy "planting seeds of change" at businesses throughout Collier County. The Marriott Hotel on Marco Island, Naples Community Hospital, and North Collier Hospital are wonderful examples of this. With the assistance of the Collier County Public Library Adult Literacy Program, all have established and are operating very successful workplace-based tutoring programs of their own. This is truly lifelong learning at its best, and the library is proud to be a part of it.

Notes

- 1 1991 National Literacy Act [online]. [cited August 2001]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://novel.nifl.gov/public-law.html>
- 2 Reder, Stephen, "The State of Literacy in America: Estimates at the Local, State and National Levels," National Institute for Literacy [online]. [cited August 2001]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.nifl.gov/reders/reder.htm>
- 3 Florida Literacy Coalition, *The Florida Literacy Data & Statistics Handbook*. 2000.

Roberta Reiss is Program Coordinator for the Collier County Public Library Adult Literacy Program.

Linda Fasulo is Public Relations Spokeswoman for the Collier County Public Library.

Friends Tutors Share Lifetime of Learning

By Debbie Passalacqua



“Could your lifetime of learning help a child to learn?” That’s the simple invitation of the Friends Tutoring Program, a project of the Friends of North Regional/BCC Library in Coconut Creek, Florida. The library is a joint-use facility operated by Broward County Library and Broward Community College. Fifty members of the Friends of the Library tutor fifty elementary school students after school and on weekends in the library, improving the children’s reading and math skills in this northwestern suburb of Fort Lauderdale. Volunteer tutors ranging in age from high school students to senior citizens share their lifelong learning with the youngest generation. The free tutoring program is an unqualified success, with most students achieving their appropriate grade level by the end of a year in the program. Letters from parents as well as teachers’ progress reports are evidence that magic happens when dedicated volunteers help build the love of learning in youngsters.

Friends Provide Leadership

When North Regional/BCC Library opened seven years ago and started its fledgling Friends group, the Regional Supervisor proposed several projects for the Friends to adopt in support of the library’s mission to provide services to meet community needs for information, education, and recreation. The Friends steering committee jumped at the chance to build a cadre of library advocates to work one-on-one with children. This strong kick-off project actually helped build the Friends into the active and committed advocacy group it is today, and made the library “a natural” when it came to adopting Secretary of State Katherine Harris’ “Libraries of Promise” commitment. With dynamic and capable community leaders in partnership with the library, success was bound to follow.

Starting out with one Volunteer Coordinator and a handful of volunteers, the Friends worked with local schools to identify children who might benefit from the program. Signage in the library invited prospective

Friends tutor Jeanette Rosenberg works with a student at the North Regional/BCC Library. Photo by Rick Leffel.



tutors and students to join. Growing steadily, the free program is now administered by four Volunteer Coordinators, who are themselves all volunteers.

Volunteer Training

These dedicated Volunteer Coordinators train and advise volunteers in the program as well as match up students and tutors. Although the program was started by a nucleus of retired teachers, the majority of tutors have no prior teaching experience. Potential tutors meet first with the Volunteer Coordinators who determine the volunteer’s suitability for the project. Standard volunteer screening will soon be enhanced by background checks similar to those already conducted for potential employees. Next, volunteers participate in group-orientation sessions led by the Volunteer Coordinators and the Head of Youth Services, in which they learn about tutoring techniques and support materials. Finally, the new tutor is paired with a more experienced tutor for observation and mentoring until the new tutor is ready to work more independently. “Tutor Rap Sessions” throughout the year are an opportunity for

all tutors to link together with the Volunteer Coordinators, share successful techniques, challenges and solutions, and get vital feedback.

When a tutor is matched with a child, the Volunteer Coordinators stay in close touch with the pair. Should a parent request a change or if for any reason a pairing isn’t optimal, the Volunteer Coordinators help work through the challenges and even reassign tutors if needed.

Depending on each child’s need, the volunteer tutor and student work for one or two hours weekly with the student’s textbook, library materials, or supplemental tutoring materials purchased by the Friends of the Library for the program. Each child’s parents and teacher are contacted periodically to help identify needs and assess progress.

Library Support

All of the tutoring takes place in the library. This helps ensure the safety of the child and the volunteer because activities are always in a public, staff-supervised space. It also provides a comfortable work area for tutor and student. “The library,” observes one tutor,

“Could your lifetime of learning help a child to learn?”

“is a delightful, non-threatening environment for tutoring.”

In addition to providing space for the tutoring, library staff members serve as liaisons to the tutoring program. The Head of Youth Services, the Assistant Regional Librarian, and the Regional Supervisor advise the Friends on library-related procedures and policies at monthly Friends Board meetings and through informal discussions throughout the year.

Because the program depends so heavily on volunteers, costs have been minimal. The only costs associated with the program have been for a small collection of resource materials (about \$200 for a starting collection), the cost of refreshments at tutor meetings, and an annual volunteer recognition tea.

Impact of Program

The creation of the tutoring program grew from the recognition that today's families are subject to many types of stress and that parents sometimes lack the time or the skills to help their children with schoolwork. “Parents are so grateful for the help,” says a tutor. “The tutoring eases their burdens and gives youngsters the undivided attention they need so much.” Given the time and talent of a caring adult or teen to equalize opportunity when it comes to learning, the Friends have found that many children who may have lacked prior opportunity begin to flourish and enjoy learning.

Proof of this is found in the evaluation surveys parents return to the library with comments on their child's progress. Library volunteers and staff glow when they read about the eight-year-old boy who now picks up books on his own at home and reads, when he never did so before. After a year in the program, a nine-year-old gets improved

spelling grades, sounds out words when his mother says he never tried before, and now reads close to his grade average. A student who started the school year with an “F” in math attained a “C” average after nine months in the program. Another child scores 100 percent now on spelling and math tests.

The surveys are full of appreciative comments about this unique program that not only teaches the children, but also builds bonds by listening, caring, and supporting. One parent sums it up by saying “I've totally enjoyed [the tutor]. My son looks forward to going to tutoring class not just for the learning. He loves her, too.” Another appreciative parent says it all when she says, “It is a wonderful program!... [the tutor] is fantastic. She made learning a fun experience.”

Tutors echo the positive comments from parents about the benefits of the program. “I have formed bonds with parents as well as students,” explains one tutor. “I'm glad when a resistant student accepts me and the program. I know I've succeeded in reaching a student when his behavior and academics improve.” “With some students,” observes another tutor, “success is measured in tiny steps. But when you see a student's self-image turning from negative to positive, it is incredibly fulfilling and gratifying.”

Growing to Meet Community Needs

In its five years of existence, the Friends Tutoring Program has worked with more than 160 children, and it continues to grow with the needs of the community it serves. An increasing number of students are bilingual, so some tutors focus on improving English language skills as well as other academic skills. An unanticipated benefit of the program is that many tutors also serve as informal coaches for parents who may have recently immigrated to the United States. In addition to discussing needed information about a variety of services available in the community, tutors and parents share information about their lives and cultures. The Friends' efforts to recruit both bilingual tutors and younger tutors who are more comfortable with “new math” is also helping the Friends be a more diverse group reflective of the community their library serves.

The volunteers are truly enthused that their lifetime of learning contributes to the success of the next generation. The Friends Tutoring Program is one of several ongoing membership projects that keep the Friends of North Regional/BCC Library healthy, active and continually growing, now topping 300 members. Eager to share their program with any other library Friends groups, the Friends have a packet of information that can be mailed on request by calling the Library's secretary at (954) 969-2606.

Debbie Passalacqua is Regional Supervisor, Broward County Library.

Libraries of Promise

In response to Governor Bush's Mentoring Initiative, the Department of State developed the Libraries of Promise program in 1999. Over 300 Florida libraries have committed to this program by providing locations where community members can offer one or all of five fundamental resources to children and youth.

- Ongoing relationship with caring adults (Mentor)
- Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours (Protect)
- Healthy minds and healthy bodies (Nurture)
- Marketable skills through effective education (Teach)
- Opportunities for young people to give back through volunteer or community service (Serve)

Additional information on the Libraries of Promise Program is available at <http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/lop.htm>.

Adding Links to the Chain: Creating A Community of Lifelong Learners

By Heidi Updike



When we developed the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library's five-year plan," explains Administration and Operations Director Clinton Taffe, "we knew we wanted to instill a love of reading in citizens of all ages, provide quality, efficient, and timely services and free, unlimited access to information using the latest technologies. Our goal was to enrich the whole community, not only our current patrons." This goal has inspired a variety of dynamic programs that reach out to create new patrons from groups previously unfamiliar with the library's services. The programs, *Born to Read*, *Story Power*, *A Promise to Teens*, the *Family Literacy Centers*, and *It's a Wonderful Life . . . After You Retire*, are funded by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Program Grants. Whether teaching basic literacy, making the library a great place for children, teens, and families, or promoting personal growth for seniors, each LSTA grant-funded program is designed to create lifelong learners.

Meeting Diverse Needs

The programs serve a wide range of the community, from newborns to seniors and from nonreaders to those with advanced degrees. Based on educational studies identifying the importance of starting learning at birth, the *Born to Read* and *Story Power* programs focus on at-risk newborn and young children. The Literacy Volunteers of Leon County's Family Literacy Centers complement these programs by addressing the literacy needs of families in disadvantaged communities. All three programs concentrate on providing at-risk children and their parents with books and materials and stress the importance of being able to read.

Keeping at-risk young adults interested in learning is the goal of the Library's teen grant program, *Promise to Teens*. It furnishes a constructive alternative to unsupervised after school hours for teenagers bursting with energy and facing the choice of furthering their potential or being diverted to harmful activities. While harnessing youthful energy is one focus, retirement presents another kind

of challenge. For seniors, the newly found freedom of time can be daunting. The expanded activities and services provided by *It's A Wonderful Life . . . After You Retire* make that extra time the perfect opportunity to maximize personal growth.

Born to Read

Born to Read is the best known of the library's programs. Part of a national initiative, it targets at-risk teen mothers and caregivers, encouraging reading to their children from the time they are born until they start school. "Brain research has identified the value of reading to children from birth to five years for brain development and language skills," says Youth Services Coordinator Mary Jo Peltier. "The real challenge is to convince frustrated new mothers that kids are learning even though they are wiggling around and aren't focused. We have to overcome that assumption."

Partnering with Tallahassee Memorial Hospital's Newborn Intensive Care Unit, the Department of Education's Healthy Start Program, Serenity Shores Homeless Shelter, the Lively Technical Center, and the Brehon Institute, a program that works with families referred by the court system, *Born to Read* will reach 700 Leon County families in 2001. The \$24,595 budget purchases bookbags, sippy cups, bibs, refrigerator magnets and culturally diverse books to encourage reading.

Rather than working with the mothers directly, Peltier and Library Project Specialist Jayme Harpring train nurses and counselors in hour-and-a-half workshops. Nurses leave training sessions excited to demonstrate new skills and materials with their clients during home visits. Sharing "The Eensy Weensy Spider" finger rhymes and books like Caldecott Winner *More More More Said the Baby* can turn a tense home visit into a fun experience for both nurse and family.

Story Power

Story Power takes up from where *Born to Read* ends by focusing on elementary and middle school-aged children. Workshops for children and their parents are held in community centers of selected apartment complexes. African American storyteller Wendell Campbell's tales of Anansi the Spider, the trickster of Ashanti folklore, catch the kids' attention. Their parents and caregivers come for the books and prizes. Everyone loves the free pizza. With this unbeatable combination of attractions, *Story Power* workshops stress the importance of reading and books to both at-risk children and their caregivers. The promise of a Saturday afternoon of serious fun attracts an average of sixty children and fifteen to twenty adults to a workshop.

Early Education Specialist Carolyn Schultz has found the biggest challenge to be getting adults to attend. To overcome this, the library gives away prizes such as car repair kits and

The appearance of Eleanor Roosevelt, portrayed by Joan Wolfberg, drew many seniors to the library for Seniors Appreciation Day.



Teens design Web pages in the "Promise to Teens" program.



Excited children select new books at a Story Power workshop.

gift certificates donated by Publix, Barnes & Nobles, and Lowes. Children's books reflect the interests and needs of the targeted communities and include eye-catching nonfiction, the popular *Harry Potter* and *I Spy* series, Newbery Honor Book *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963*, and Caldecott Winner *John Henry*.

"Carolyn put so much energy into getting flyers out to community centers, putting up Taltran [city bus system] posters, and getting donations from local businesses," explains Youth Services Coordinator Peltier. "Scholastic Books gave hundreds of slightly damaged books, and she took them to apartment managers with flyers about the *Story Power* workshops. By empowering them to give away the books to residents, she got their support."

The rewards make it worth the work. "When we returned to the community center for our second *Story Power* workshop a little boy was there, just waiting for us to come back. It was in one of the toughest neighborhoods to get people to come. He brought back all three books we gave him from the first workshop and was hoping he could pick out more," continues Peltier. "At the community centers, we always had a table of special books, just for adults to pick out. We had a mom who said her son was failing reading, but she got this book with a plastic model of the human body. It just fascinated her son, and he read the book a number of times to figure out how to put the model together. She said he increased his reading scores and his science grades in just four or five weeks."

"You have to have faith that these grants work," Peltier believes. "These families don't have books in the home and don't use libraries. We need to physically put the books in their hands to spark something in these kids' imagination. Teach them the pleasure of reading."

Family Literacy Centers

Literacy has been a focus in the library for almost twenty years. The Literacy Volunteers of Leon County have over 140 tutors who use videos, books, and computers to promote literacy to the eighteen percent of the county's population who are considered to be illiterate. Ellen Lauricella, Literacy Project Coordinator, oversees the *Family Literacy Centers*, a \$59,000 outreach project. Working out of the Dr. B. L. Perry, Jr. Branch Library, Literacy Services Specialists Rose-Anna Smith and Jackie Woods teach pre-reading and reading skills to children in four preschools from disadvantaged communities. In addition to tutoring weekly classes of seven to eight children, each month they distribute bags of books, activities, and pamphlets to families to stimulate pre-reading and reading skills.

The program continues to grow. The new Dr. B. L. Perry, Jr. Branch has a dedicated literacy classroom and four tutoring rooms. Lauricella is also excited about a successful new national initiative, "Reach Out and Read." Working with health clinics in high-risk neighborhoods, the library distributes new books and information on literacy to parents bringing their children in for "well-child" visits. "The clinic doctors write a prescription

to read a book. When families come back for their second appointment, the doctor asks about the book, writes another prescription, and gives them another shiny new book," she explains. The *Family Literacy Centers* recognize that instilling the love of reading in children is linked to the literacy of the whole family.

Promise to Teens

Producing lifelong learners doesn't end with childhood. The \$36,000 *Promise to Teens* project works with young adults to teach technology skills and develop a teen Web site linked to the library's homepage. Eight students, recruited from at-risk and unsupervised after school groups, meet three afternoons a week for six weeks to learn HTML. Using computers, LCD projectors, and scanners, they design and maintain the Web site with news and information for their peers. Youth Services Coordinator Peltier hopes to eventually use the teen Web site to link mentors from the community with at-risk young adults. In a 2001 version of pen pals, mentors will be paired with middle and high school students to read and discuss books, help with homework, and become role models.

Co-sponsors include the Tallahassee Urban League and the Bethel Family Life Center. Unlike some programs, the biggest challenge is not a lack of participation, but getting the technology up and running. Delays in setting up the computer network didn't slow down the teens who meet regularly with Library Project Specialist Cindy Knoblauch. "These kids have great ideas and watching them surf the Internet is amazing," says Knoblauch. "Before we had a chance to work on the Web site, they were helping other kids on the library's computers navigate the Web."

It's A Wonderful Life

Encouraging learning, computer skills, and reading in seniors is the focus of *It's A Wonderful Life...After You Retire*. Robie Visk, Seniors Grant Coordinator, works with a Seniors Advisory Council to design programs for the 20,000 senior citizens in Leon County. "The library is committed to our elder citizens. Our Seniors' Grant is part of a statewide initiative to recognize the contributions and

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Adding Links to the Chain

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needs of our senior population," Visk explains. Based on the results of a survey of seniors, the \$21,000 grant expands library services and outreach activities to include workshops on health issues, retirement and leisure activities, free cultural events, a genealogy program, specially labeled and shelved books on topics of interest to seniors, outreach services at retirement facilities, and computer classes at the library and senior centers.

Kicking off the program, Marjorie Turnbull, former Leon County Commission Chair and state representative, proclaimed the third Tuesday in May *Seniors Appreciation Day* at the library. After highlighting the new library programs and services, Seniors Appreciation Day continued with "Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady to the World", one of a series of performances co-sponsored by the Florida Humanities Council and The Institute of Museum and Library Services. After touring the library and signing up for computer classes,

first-time visitors reminisced with Mrs. Roosevelt, portrayed by Joan Wolfberg, about reading her daily newspaper column.

"Eleanor Roosevelt is the perfect spokesperson for our Seniors Appreciation Day celebration and all the Library's outreach programs," says Library Director Helen Moeller. "She was active well after retirement age, representing our country at the United Nations until she was sixty-eight. In a speech from 1936, she challenged us to make libraries the center of a new life in the mind, because people are hungry to use their minds. We're meeting that challenge."

Establishing the library as a gateway to lifelong learning and a place to instill a love of reading at all ages is part of the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library's vision statement. By using LSTA grant funds to create programs that reach beyond current patrons, the library hopes to meet the needs of the entire community it serves. With their

focus on the educational needs of at-risk newborn and elementary school-aged children, *Born to Read* and *Story Power* hope to capture bright young minds. The *Family Literacy Centers* concentrate on the literacy needs of the entire family by giving at-risk children and their parents the opportunity to become lifelong learners. Directing the enormous potential of adolescents to positive choices for personal growth is the goal of *Promise to Teens. It's a Wonderful Life . . . After You Retire* encourages seniors to continue learning as they enter retirement. With these innovative programs the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public is meeting the challenge of enriching the lives of community members, from beginning to end.

Heidi Updike is Public Information Supervisor for the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library.

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Use Your NOODLE!

The NEFLIN Open Online Distance Learning Exchange

By Gina Persichini

In today's constantly changing library environment, library staffs need continuous training to keep current. Technology continues to move at a lightning-quick pace, and library staffs are faced with using new technologies to provide new services to a new style of library patron. The training and education received in a library science degree program, library workshops, and certificate programs are not sufficient in this rapidly changing environment. The programs provide a solid base of knowledge, yet continuing education is required to build upon that base to develop library services in keeping with current trends.

Traditional Continuing Education

Traditional, classroom-style training for library staffs has been available in central locations around Florida for years. The six regional Multi-type Library Cooperatives (MLCs), which date back to 1979, have been providing continuing education workshops for a number of years to libraries in their regions. NEFLIN, the Northeast Florida Library Information Network, provides these continuing education services to sixty member libraries located throughout twenty counties in Florida. The traditional workshops NEFLIN provides have been successful in advancing library development in the region, but the large geographic area it serves presents challenges for providing sufficient, convenient training opportunities.

Training Needs

NEFLIN's members consistently rate the Continuing Education Program as the most popular service provided by the MLC. Despite its success, NEFLIN members, particularly in rural areas, still face some major hurdles to receiving training. In a survey of the membership, NEFLIN found that those hurdles included, (1) distance from the training facility, (2) lack of adequate local computer training facilities, and (3) staff availability, including coverage for services while staff are being trained.

Distance from the training facility

As indicated in the accompanying map, NEFLIN's service area covers twenty counties across Florida reaching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. Many of the libraries in NEFLIN's service area have to drive a significant distance to get to training; some as much as a 2.5 hour drive (one way). The time investment is weighted as heavily as the monetary costs of travel. Considering that, those libraries are unable to send as many employees to a class because they are faced with keeping public service desks staffed and continuing their operations.

Lack of adequate training facilities

Training cannot be provided in many of the member libraries because they do not have adequate computer training facilities. NEFLIN tried to use alternate facilities in underserved areas of the region, but found them inadequate for technology training. In fact, the most recent survey conducted by NEFLIN's Continuing Education Committee found that, while thirteen of sixty members have computer training facilities, only three are geographically acceptable and none meet the training needs at this time; thus making on-site computer

training at the member libraries nearly impossible.

Staff availability

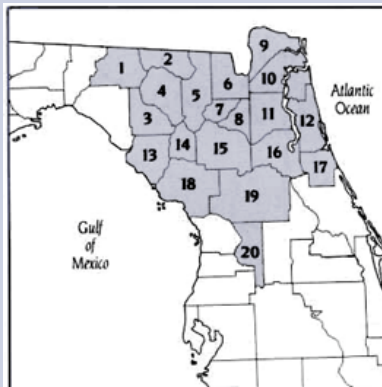
In NEFLIN's survey of the membership, 40 percent of respondents indicated that staff shortages were a hindrance for continued staff development. Because many libraries cannot afford a staff member's absence from their regular duties for an entire day (calculating travel and training time), the result is that those staff members receive no training. Further research by NEFLIN found that those employees have a need for training that can be worked around their regular schedule of duties. That is, if NEFLIN could create training opportunities using distance education methods, those employees would receive the continuing education they require.

Creating Web-Based Training

NEFLIN's response to member training needs was to rethink the means of delivering training and to seek funding through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program for a pilot project to develop online training courses. The Web-Based

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Representation of NEFLIN service area by County



- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Madison | 11. Clay |
| 2. Hamilton | 12. St. Johns |
| 3. Lafayette | 13. Dixie |
| 4. Suwannee | 14. Gilchrist |
| 5. Columbia | 15. Alachua |
| 6. Baker | 16. Putnam |
| 7. Union | 17. Flagler |
| 8. Bradford | 18. Levy |
| 9. Nassau | 19. Marion |
| 10. Duval | 20. Sumter |

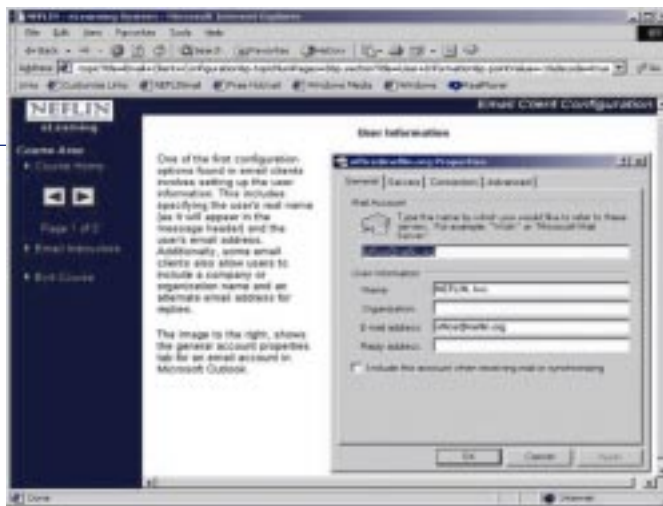
Training (WBT) technology allows NEFLIN to create interactive, multimedia training delivered via the World Wide Web. Members receive library skills training, complete hands-on exercises, and interact with an instructor from their own libraries at times convenient to their schedules.

NEFLIN developed a plan for the WBT project where staff trainers design and implement the training. To start, staff investigated WBT vendors and their products seeking the best product fit for the training needs. A few basic requirements for the system were determined. NEFLIN wanted a product that would meet the following requirements.

- Run on NEFLIN's Windows NT Internet Server
- Provide access the training through a NEFLIN Internet domain
- Gather usage statistics
- Allow for online testing, exercises, evaluation, and communication with trainers
- Allow for hyperlinks to information resources outside the training system

After some investigation, it became clear that the products designed to run on the NEFLIN servers required the installation of a database engine such as MS SQL Server or Oracle. The cost of the software would have consumed much of the allotted budget and the products themselves would consume a significant amount of network resources, negatively impacting the other services provided by our Internet server. As a result, NEFLIN found the most viable option was to store the courses on someone else's server.

NEFLIN ultimately found a product that met most of the requirements and still managed to stay within the limited project budget. SocratEase, a product of Quelsys, Inc. allows staff trainers to author their own courses and to produce statistical reports and summaries of the system's use, plus it allows trainers to include hyperlinks to Web resources outside the system. At the same time, while SocratEase stores the



Staff from member libraries can log in for Web-based training at this Web site.

course data on a computer across the country, NEFLIN is able to use a domain name (<http://neflin.socratease.com>) that made it clear the course content was created locally.

One of the features of the SocratEase system is the limitless enrollment for a course. That is, course registrations do not expire and users can retake a course as many times as they wish. When a course is updated as technology advances or new information becomes available, users can benefit from the updates with no extra cost to NEFLIN.

Developing Content

Traditional training attempts to include methods for all learning styles. Let the learners see it, let them hear it, and let them try it on their own. Taking the lecture, demonstration, and hands-on exercises of a traditional training session and converting them to the Web-based training medium was no small task. Keeping the end-users in mind, course developers had to find a way to make the lecture from a three, four, or even six-hour training session flow easily through a series of Web pages and hold the learner's attention enough to get the information across.

Even though they were developing training on courses they have taught for years, NEFLIN staff found themselves spending more time developing each WBT course than they did creating a face-to-face workshop. While they had read the articles and seen industry reports on the time involved in creating WBT, there is no better teacher than experience. The trainers learned that future courses would

require a serious time investment for development.

It took some time, but the development phase of the project yielded three solid courses to introduce to the new style of training. The first three online courses were "Introduction to Interlibrary Loan," "Introduction to the Internet," and "NEFLIN Services Overview." A fourth course, "Using OCLC's New FirstSearch" is scheduled for completion in summer 2001. The

courses provide lectures, quizzes, graphics, examples, and opportunities to interact with the instructor. Anything possible on a Web page is possible in a WBT course including streaming audio, streaming video, java applets, and more.

Implementation

With the courses online, the NEFLIN Open Online Distance Learning Exchange (NOODLE) was operational. The service debuted to the membership in spring 2001 at NEFLIN's Continuing Education Open House. The Open House allowed members to see the Web-based training in action. The goal was to show them that it would teach them skills they needed to learn using a method of training to which staff could easily adapt. The debut was a huge success. NOODLE saw over eighty course registrations in the first month. At the time of this writing, there are currently 182 NOODLE course registrations after five months of availability, with little promotion beyond that of the Open House.

Convenience is the primary factor favored by many of those who have registered for the Web-based training. "This is a great idea for us," says Virginia Bird of the New River Public Library Cooperative. "Training at the NEFLIN lab is great, but takes one hour's drive and all day. These classes can be worked in at shorter intervals." Nassau County Public Library's Janet Loveless echoes these sentiments. "What a great way to keep staff up to date without traveling! Convenient and practical for all staff members."

“Question: How do you train 1,325 staff members in 20 counties across Florida? Answer: Use your NOODLE!”

Evaluation

In a follow-up survey it was found that eighteen of the staff members enrolled in the Web-based training courses never logged in to the system after receiving access. When asked about this, over half of the respondents surveyed indicated that time was a factor, thus confirming NEFLIN's belief that the effectiveness of a Web-based training program is highly dependent upon the amount of time invested. Staff members and their supervisors need to commit to the program and the time necessary to log in to the system and complete the courses.

The survey of users found other positive results. In inquiries regarding an individual's ability to adapt to the new style of training, 91 percent of the respondents indicated that they were able to easily adapt to the Web-based interface. Meanwhile, 92 percent of the

respondents indicated they would participate in more Web-based training opportunities.

The Next Step: Using Our NOODLE

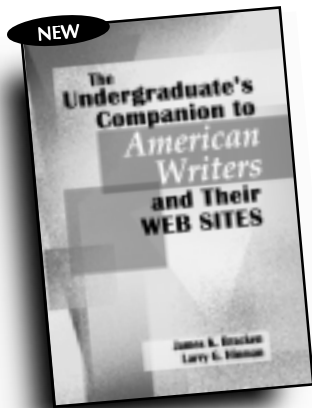
NEFLIN has been awarded funding to continue the NOODLE through Phase 2 of the pilot project, commencing October 1, 2001. In this next phase, NEFLIN will first expand the library skills content by developing more courses focused on library skills including topics on reference, interlibrary loan, and cataloging.

Next, pre-packaged computer skills training will be added to the system. These packages have hundreds of high-quality training sessions prepared by qualified instructors and are available through subscription. By using pre-packaged computer skills training, NEFLIN can substantially increase the number of courses offered. Meanwhile, NEFLIN staff can focus on developing the library-specific skills content for the system.

Finally, NEFLIN will focus on increasing the number of users on the system through presentations, mailings and other promotional efforts. The goal is to create highly skilled library employees using their NOODLE!

Gina Persichini is Assistant Director of the Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN).

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Conquering Technophobia... A New Lease on Life

By Linda Fasulo

It's no secret...the life expectancy in the United States has increased. People, quite simply, are living longer and in greater numbers. While health-related problems can and do influence the quality of life of older Americans, information from the Administration on Aging indicates that lifestyle changes such as keeping physically and mentally active and socially engaged have been shown to impact positively on both the quality of life and longevity.¹ Recognizing this, state and local programs for the elderly are being developed to help our aging population maintain their independence through mental and social stimulation. One program is Seniors On-Line, an outreach of the Collier County Public Library system.

The Seniors On-Line Program is funded by a Library Services and Technology Act grant awarded to the library in September of 2000, plus matching funds from The Friends of the Library of Collier County, Inc. and the Collier County Public Library. Its original focus was to address the special informational needs of older adults by bringing technological resources and training to the residents of assisted and independent living facilities where the average age is eighty-five years. Given the favorable response to the program countywide, the original target group has been expanded to also include all seniors requesting this specialized computer training.

Computer Use Among Seniors

Seniors constitute the most rapidly expanding group of Web users in the country, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.² More than 11.1 million people over age fifty-five were online in 1999, and that figure will triple to 34.1 million by 2004, predicts International Data Corporation, an e-commerce research firm.³

But technophobia is still alive and well, and statistics indicate that the digital divide is greatest among those over fifty. According to a recent article in *Boardwatch Magazine*, "Significant differences exist among various age groups, with kids (ages two to twelve) and seniors (ages sixty-five and older) lagging behind the national average in online penetration." The article further stated that

the gap is expected to narrow in the next five years, with senior penetration increasing from 16 percent to 48 percent by 2005.⁴

In the past, there appeared to be a "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" philosophy within the computer industry. That assumption was based largely on a 1980s survey of business executives, which concluded that older corporate management staff was resistant to the introduction of desktop computers.⁵ The survey's conclusions lead the computer industry to focus their efforts on children and young adults.

Since the early 1990s, personal computer hardware and software innovations like the mouse and Microsoft Windows have made the computer considerably more user friendly. The resultant effect of these innovative design and software changes is that the personal computer has become far more appealing to seniors.

Interest Exceeds Expectations

Despite being technologically disenfranchised, the desire among senior citizens in Collier County to learn to use computers is great. When a local Naples newspaper ran a story on the grant award, it mentioned a need for volunteers to be trained as tutors who would then educate the program's target group on computer usage and gave a phone number for the Seniors On-Line office. Within twenty-four hours over 100 phone calls were received by the library, not from those interested in volunteering, but from seniors wishing to be trained on computers. Most of the callers did not reside in the independent and assisted living facilities targeted by the program, but names and contact numbers were recorded.

Collier County Public Library's mission includes providing services for the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of all

Seniors On-Line Outreach Specialist Ronney Cox provides one-on-one computer training to student Forrest Kitchens. Kitchens is delighted that he and his wife are now computer literate and able to communicate readily with family and friends.

residents within the county. Given that in Collier County there are roughly 93,000 residents over age fifty-five, this constitutes a sizeable demographic.⁵ After careful consideration, the library's Extension Services staff decided to expand the original focus of the program to also include all those who had responded to the newspaper article announcing the grant. By and large, the partnering facilities also agreed to accommodate those seniors who did not reside within their respective locations.

Establishing Partnerships

After hiring an Outreach Specialist to oversee Seniors On-Line, the difficult task began of selecting ten partnering facilities from among more than twenty located within the county. Criteria included need and resident populations within the individual facilities, as well as the ability to provide activity rooms for group presentations and space for the computer workstations. The Seniors On-Line program provides the hardware, software, data lines, computer desks, Internet access, and training geared specifically to the individual physical and mental needs and limitations of participating seniors. Initially, three partnering facilities were selected and the equipment and programs put in place.

Surveying Prospective Students

A survey of residents was conducted to determine specific needs in terms of training



“The program offers these older adults an opportunity to reconnect with others and is providing opportunities for them to once again feel useful and involved in life.”

and education. Survey questions included whether or not the respondent had children, grandchildren, or other relatives who used computers; whether they anticipated receiving and sending e-mail if computer access was available; if they had an interest in online shopping or playing electronic games like bridge, checkers, poker, etc.; if using the computer as a research tool for stocks, medical or travel information, and distance learning opportunities was of interest to them; and if they would use the computer to access the library's online catalog or to contact the library. Well over 60% of those who responded said they would use all of these services.

Developing the Program

Once interests were determined, a curriculum was created to address each of these areas. Three levels of computer instruction were developed. The first was a training syllabus designed for larger groups, which includes an introductory program designed to cover basic computer operation. This program also offers training on Internet usage, along with instruction on how to access the Collier County Public Library online. The second level program consists of a series of hands-on workshops for smaller groups. The third provides direct one-on-one individualized help. Training manuals were also developed to aid in reinforcing the instruction.

Hardware selected for the program included ten Gateway Pentium III computers with 19" monitors, keyboard and mouse, and computer desks designed to comfortably accommodate the needs of those seniors in both assisted and independent living situations. Software included Windows 2000, along with Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, and Publisher. All programs were set to default at 24-point fonts to accommodate those who are visually impaired, and training options have also been included for those whose fine motor skills are somewhat limited.

From February through June 2001, the Seniors On-Line Program conducted seventy-one individual and small group training sessions, with a total attendance in excess of 600 seniors. Additionally, nine training classes designed for larger groups have been added to

the schedule to accommodate those seniors who do not reside within the partnering facilities.

Impact of Program

Now that all ten partnering facilities are fully functioning, the measurable success of the Seniors On-line Program has left little doubt as to the impact of technology on the quality of life of our older residents. Seniors enjoy participating in programs and services, doing research, playing games on the computer, and keeping in touch with family. One instructor shared the story of a ninety-six-year-old woman who, in her first lesson, was unable to lift her fingers to operate the mouse buttons. Her instructor literally had to place her own fingers beneath those of the elderly student to raise and lower the student's fingers. On her second visit with this student, the instructor found her playing Solitaire, and, although her pupil's movements were slow and deliberate, she was using the mouse like a pro.

Wayne and Ruth Byers, a couple in their eighties, are thrilled because they have both learned to use the Microsoft Outlook program and can send and receive e-mail from their daughter who lives in Maine. Other benefits are not as obvious, but are equally important. Jean, an elderly Haitian gentleman in Immokalee, logs on to Haitian newspaper Web sites, where he is able to keep abreast of what's happening in his native country. In another case, an elderly Cuban gentleman has discovered the Microsoft media player and listens to Cuban television and radio online. One day, he became so upset with statements made by Fidel Castro that he tried to e-mail him to express his displeasure. When the Web site asked for his name, address, and phone

number, he thought better of the e-mail idea and is now content to just listen.

The excitement and enthusiasm this program has generated among seniors is contagious. On class nights, students are lined up and waiting at the door for their instructors to arrive. While computers do not require a great deal of physical activity, they do offer tremendous opportunities for mental stimulation and social support. What has been truly amazing is that those who have participated in the training programs and have reached a comfort level with the new technology are beginning to instruct their peers within the respective independent and assisted living centers on the intricacies and advantages of computer literacy. Not only has the program offered these older adults an opportunity to reconnect with others, it is providing opportunities for them to once again feel useful and involved in life. For these seniors, technophobia has become a thing of the past.

Notes

- 1 "Longevity and the Power of a Healthy Lifestyle." Administration on Aging [online]. [cited August 2001]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.aoa.gov/factsheets/longevity.html>
- 2 "Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide." U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Telecommunications & Information Administration. [online]. [cited August 2001]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fttn99/contents.html>
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Linda Fasulo is Public Relations Spokeswoman for the Collier County Public Library system.

Florida Settings Provide Backdrop for Variety of Reading

By Joyce Sparrow

Florida can be anything and everything the reader wants it to be: a refuge, a tourist trap, a training ground, a meteorologist's casebook or a final resting place. This statement is taken from the preface to an excellent story collection *100% Pure Florida Fiction An Anthology* (University of Florida Press 0-8130-1752-1 cloth, \$49.95; 0-8130-1753-X paper, \$16.95). Editors Susan Hubbard and Robley Wilson chose Florida settings as the glue for this superior collection that includes stories from recognized authors such as Alison Lurie, Jill McCorkle, and Joy Williams. Emerging writers give additional spark to the selections. Available in hardback or paperback, this book is a mandatory purchase for all library collections and should also be considered as a selection for book discussion groups.

A Place of Espionage

Mystery writers like to make Florida a sinister place of espionage. To add to this popular Florida genre, Tropical Press has published three suspense novels full of strong, memorable characters.

Steve Glassman introduces readers to librarian Melba T. Applewood in his new hard, fast-paced thriller *The Near Death Experience* (Tropical Press 0-9666173-71, paper \$16.95). Melba, the tall, sexy, academic librarian, works with a college professor, Bru Bruton, to uncover the white-collar criminals behind the contamination of the orange juice crop that is causing a national epidemic. Bru calls Melba the only librarian he knew who had the nerve to break a rule. This comment alone is enough to encourage librarians throughout the state to take an interest in this novel. Underneath Bru's sharp language and bumbling ways, is a good person who is lucky to have a smart woman on his side. With Bru's ability to attract disaster, it takes a librarian to save his life and reputation.

Lies Within (Tropical Press, 0-9666173-0-4 paper, \$14.95) by Michael Largo is a suspenseful tale set in the Everglades. Circumstances dictate that CIA agents James and Lily Curan stage their own deaths and

send their children to be cared for by Tucker, James' rough but good-hearted cousin who lives on the edge of the big swamp. This is a suspense novel full of smoke and mirrors. It is Tucker's efforts to protect and nurture the children through adolescence and into adulthood that adds a speck of hope to this tale of drug smugglers, murders, snakes, and alligators.

Welcome to Miami (Tropical Press, 0-9666173-4-7, paper \$14.95), another novel

"Florida can be anything and everything the reader wants it to be."

by Michael Largo, features the escapades of Emilio Abierto, an exile involved in a plot to contaminate the water supply in south Florida. The story is presented through conversations between Max, a native Floridian, and a front man for a certain movie producer, Mr. Stone. Max is looking for his fifteen minutes of fame and Mr. Stone is looking for his next blockbuster movie. Especially dark and comical are the details about how Abierto's family has embraced American culture with a love for fast food, computer games and Disney theme parties.

Treasure in the Sea

Turning now to nonfiction, several new works focus on aspects of the sea, clearly one of the distinguishing characteristics making Florida a unique place. John Viele has added another book to Pineapple Press' *The Florida Keys* series. This narrative history of the Keys continues with volume 3, *The Wreckers* (Pineapple Press 1-56164-219-3, cloth \$16.95), covering the Spanish salvage operations that came to the Keys in the 1600s and 1700s and continuing with the Bahamian sailors and



Photo courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives.

New England anglers who discovered the riches that surfaced on the Florida Reef. This new addition to the series, along with the previous two volumes should be in all Florida public library collections.

Pleasure in the Sea

Another book focusing on the natural history of Florida is *Seasons of the Seas* by Jay Humpheys, in association with The Florida Sea Grant Collection Program (Pineapple Press 1-56164-226-6 cloth, \$14.95). This narrative study of the coasts of Florida outlines what the changing seasons bring to the marine environment of Florida's coastal waters. The habits of whales, snook, spiny lobsters and sharks are explored in a readable work for beachcombers. Jim Wilson accompanies the text with beautiful detailed ink drawings.

Fishing Adventures in Florida by Max Hunn (Pineapple Press 1-56164-218-5 paper, \$12.95) focuses on an informal history of sport fishing with light tackle in Florida waters before the



Photo courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives.

SOLINET Collaborative Library Leadership Institute

By Vince Mariner and Beth
Watson

The second SOLINET Collaborative Library Leadership Institute was held in Atlanta, Georgia, May 7-11, 2001. The Institute brought together thirty librarians representing all types of libraries and library organizations in the southeastern United States. The Institute participants held various positions and represented different types of libraries. This diverse assembling of future library leaders helped to create a dynamic and rewarding environment for learning.

Florida was well represented at the Institute. Daniel Wright from the Central Florida Library Consortium (CFLC), Charles Mayberry from the Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), Marian Deeney from the State Library of Florida, Beth Watson from the Tampa Bay Library Consortium (TBLC), Phalbe Henriksen from Bradford County Public Library, Andrea Carter from Lee County Public Library, and Vince Mariner from the Southwest Florida Library Network (SWFLN) made up the Florida gang.

The core of the Institute was focused on presenting practical models to assist with strategic planning, with emphasis on facilitating the collaborative process. This led to many class-wide, small group, and learning partner discussion sessions. These opportunities for open dialogue enabled participants to learn from each other. Working together and leading teams were

the focus of many activities in small groups and with learning partners.

The various speakers discussed many facets of libraries and librarianship and leadership techniques. Keynote speaker and Executive Director of the Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), Tom Sloan, emphasized that libraries must be the masters of technology and centralize end-user services. Angee Baker, Vice President of Planning and Strategic Alliances of SOLINET discussed the future of libraries. Rhoda Channing, Director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library of Wake Forest University discussed leadership and Frances Maloy, Leader of Access Services at Emory University discussed change in libraries. Ed Klee, Training and Management Consultant, spent the better part of a day working with participants on managing conflict.

The Institute brought this group of librarians together to learn about leadership, collaboration, and ourselves. It was an exciting opportunity to meet and grow with colleagues throughout the southeast. Our group bonded and many good, new friendships were formed.

Vince Mariner is Continuing Education Coordinator for the Southwest Florida Library Network.

Beth Watson is Assistant Director of the Tampa Bay Library Consortium.

days when coastal waters were not overrun with million-dollar pleasure boats and roaring jet skis. Personal adventures recounting exciting tales of kingfish and tarpon fishing give readers an up-close look at the excitement found in a good day of fishing.

Manatees

Manatee books are popular with library patrons of all ages. *In the Company of Manatees*



Photo courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives.

A *Tribute* by Barbara Sleeper and Jeff Foott (Three Rivers Press 0-609-80331-X paper, \$21.00) is a beautiful coffee table book that includes outstanding photographs to accompany an exploration of the network of government agencies, private corporations, conservation groups, and research facilities that have joined efforts to save the manatee. The authors champion the cause of the manatee as the "poster child" for conservation and environmental protection.

Manatees and Dugongs of the World with text by Jeff Ripple and photography by Doug Perrine (Voyageur Press 0-89658-393-7 cloth, \$29.95) will also be popular with patrons. The worldly focus on the natural history and myth of the four living species of manatees gives readers a thorough understanding of manatee behavior and lore.

"Florida Reads" is compiled by Joyce Sparrow, librarian at the Juvenile Welfare Board Library in Pinellas Park, FL. She can be contacted at jsparrow@jwbpinellas.org.

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Scenes from the 2001 Conference



Exhibitors displayed their latest materials and demonstrated their systems for the 800+ attendees.



FLA President Mary Brown assists chef Curtis Aikens at the Scholarship Fundraiser.



Keynote speaker Walt Crawford spoke on ways libraries can build community.



Rita Vine's program on effective Internet searching drew large crowds.



The Tropicals entertained those attending the Scholarship Fundraiser.

Award Winners

(Presented at 2001 Conference)

Betty Davis Miller Youth Services Award
Clearwater Public Library System
Youth Advisory Committee

Exhibit Award
University Press of Florida

Highsmith Innovation in Education
Hallandale Branch,
Broward County Library
Character Education

Intellectual Freedom
Citizens Against Library Censorship,
Marion County Library System

Library Service Enhancement
Pinellas Genealogy Society,
Largo Library

Outstanding Citizen
Norman Tripp, Esq.,
Broward County Library

Friends & Trustees Library Award
Kathryn Porter, Largo Library

Friends & Trustees Membership Drive
Friends of the Selby Public Library,
Sarasota County Library System

Friends & Trustees Newsletter Award
Friends of the Library Tampa-
Hillsborough, Inc.
Something to Read

Friends & Trustees Special Project
Friends of the Alachua County
Library District
Snuggle Up and Read: Books for
Kids